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Indigo co-founder Gangwal steps down from board

Rakesh Gangwal resigned from board of directors of the airline's parent company InterGlobe Aviation on Friday

The 69-year-old co-promoter, who currently owns 37% shares of the company, said he will reduce his stake over the next five years

Such a gradual reduction of his stake, he said, will allow him to benefit from some of the upside. In the meantime, to avoid exposure to any unpublished sensitive information, he will step down from the board

His resignation comes days after the board appointed co-founder Rahul Bhatia, with whom Gangwal had sparred for long, as the Managing Director of InterGlobe Aviation | P13

Ahmedabad blasts: Death for 38

Special court hands life imprisonment to 11 others for deadly 2008 serial bombings

DILIP SINGH KSHATRIYA @Ahmedabad

A special court on Friday handed down death penalty to 38 out of 49 convicts in the 2008 Ahmedabad serial blasts case and life imprisonment till death to the remaining 11. This is the first time in India's judicial history that so many accused have been awarded capital punishment in a single case. Earlier, 26 people were sentenced to death in the Rajiv Gandhi assassination case.

At least 56 people were killed and 246 injured in the back-to-back bombings that rocked the commercial capital of Gujarat on July 26, 2008. Then little known Indian Mujahideen (IM) claimed responsibility for the blasts, which also targeted hospitals, terming it a "revenge" for the 2002 Gujarat riots. Former SIMI leader Safdar Nagori and Usman Agarbattiwala are among those sentenced to death. All the convicts have also been fined with ₹2.85 lakh each, while Agarbattiwala has been slapped a higher penalty of ₹2.88 lakh for 26 different offences under IPC, UAPA and Explosive Substances Act. The arguments on the quantum of sentence had concluded on Tuesday, and the court of special judge A R Patel kept the matter of judgment for Friday. A total of 78 accused were prosecuted in the case and the special court held 49 guilty, acquitting 28 others by giving them the benefit of doubt. The court also pardoned one accused, who turned approver. However, trial is yet to begin for four other accused including IM's co-founder and the mastermind behind the bombings Yasin Bhatkal, who was already sentenced to death in 2016 by a Hyderabad court for the twin blasts in 2013.

21 bombs went off in various localities of Ahmedabad on July 26, 2008

56 people were killed and more than 200 injured

The Indian Mujahideen (IM) claimed responsibility for the blasts

The trial began in Dec 2009 against 78 persons linked to IM

The prosecution sought the death penalty for all 49 convicts, while the defence lawyers pleaded for leniency considering their social and economic conditions. Counsel for the accused said he will study the judgment before deciding on challenging it.

JAB-O-METER

TAKE YOUR SHOT

NATIONWIDE	FEB 17	FEB 18
Fresh cases	30,757	25,920
Recoveries	67,538	66,254
Deaths	541	492

February 17: 33,62,813 doses

KARNATAKA	FEB 17	FEB 18
Fresh cases	1,579	1,333
Recoveries	5,079	4,890
Deaths	23	19

February 18: 32,92,516 doses

TOTAL DOSES 1,74,99,01,345

HIJAB ROW: FIR FILED AGAINST 15 PU GIRLS

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Tumakuru

THE police registered cases against 15 girl students of a government pre-university college in Tumakuru on charges of violating the prohibitory orders imposed under Section 144 of IPC. Around 40 girl students at the Government Empress Junior PU college near Townhall here had staged a protest by raising slogans when they were denied entry inside classrooms for wearing hijab and burqa on Wednesday.

They took out a rally for a short time and a small distance when the deputy commissioner's prohibitory orders were in force. On Thursday, Assistant Commissioner Ajay held a meeting with Deputy Director of Pre-University Education Gangadhar and college principal Shanmukhappa. Later, on the instructions of the assistant commissioner, the principal filed a complaint with the police, who registered the FIR. The FIR, however, does not name any student, official sources said. Meanwhile, a group of students along with their parents and two teachers protested near Mini Vidhana Soudha on Thursday evening and they demanded a meeting with the deputy commissioner to present their appeal. Later, Tahsildar Mohan Kumar G V met them. **RELATED REPORTS: P4**

Student with tilak stopped at Indi college

MAHESH M GOUDAR @Vijayapura

The hijab controversy is now taking a different turn as lecturers denied entry to a student with vermilion (tilak) on his forehead in Indi town on Friday.

As he was restricted from entering the campus, the student, Gangadhar Badiger, started arguing with college authorities and he was joined by his classmates. The lecturers said that applying vermilion represents a particular religion and is in violation of the Karnataka High Court's interim order which prohibits display of any religious identity in schools and colleges.

As the argument heated up, the police intervened and sent him to class, putting an end to the issue. But the situation remained tense for a few hours in the college and the police were deployed till the end of college hours.

LIVE-STREAMING WILL GO ON: HC

The Karnataka HC will continue live streaming of the hijab case. After the petitioner's counsel sought that live streaming be discontinued as arguments are being taken out of context, the advocate general opposed. The full bench of the HC indicated that live streaming will continue. **P4**

CBI grills former NSE chief over ties with mysterious 'Himalayan baba'

RAM SAHGAL @Mumbai

THE CBI, which had registered a case against former NSE MD & CEO Chitra Ramkrishna in the co-location matter in 2018, on Friday grilled her on the email exchanges between her an unknown person.

The investigating agency also issued a lookout circular against Ramkrishna, her predecessor Ravi Narain and her then advisor Anand Subramanian to ensure they don't leave the country.

The CBI swooped down on Ramkrishna's residence in suburban Mumbai at 10 am Friday and the grilling was expected to last 10 hours, sources said. Since the Maharashtra government withdrew general consent to CBI to investigate cases in the state in 2020 in the wake of the TRP scandal, the central agency is probing her under an old case registered against her.

Chitra Ramakrishna

"CBI is quizzing Ramkrishna on the emails between her and her so-called spiritual mentor in which she has divulged sensitive and confidential details about the NSE as cited in the SEBI's recent order," said a person aware of the developments. "The questioning is to ascertain whether any pecuniary benefit accrued to her or the Unknown person and whether there was misuse of office." It is learnt that Ramkrishna maintained the same line with CBI sleuths that she took with Sebi, that the sharing of information didn't cause any financial loss to NSE.

SC tells UP to refund CAA protesters' fines

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @New Delhi

THE Supreme Court on Friday directed the Uttar Pradesh government to refund damages recovered from alleged anti-CAA protestors accused of destroying public property.

The UP government had sent notices to protesters to recover damages during the protests in December 2019.

Last week, the SC directed the government to withdraw the notices. On Friday, the state government informed the court that it has withdrawn 274 notices.

The court, then, asked the government to refund the money collected thus far. However, it allowed the state to recover damages under the new law — Uttar Pradesh Recovery of Damage to Public and Private Property Act, 2020 — after establishing before the claims tribunal that public properties were indeed damaged.

EXPRESS READ

Sex tape: Apex court stays HC order

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Friday stayed the Karnataka High Court order that allowed the SIT, formed to probe a sex CD scandal involving former minister Ramesh Jarkiholi, to submit its final report before the trial court. Hearing the petition filed by the victim, the SC asked the High Court to dispose of the matter on March 9, the next date of hearing. P4

Another garbage crisis hits Bengaluru city

Bengaluru: The city's waste was not collected on Friday, and is unlikely to be picked up until Monday. Reason: Delay in paying wages and payments to garbage contractors and collectors. P2

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